

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS COMMENTS ON GENEVA ME CONFERENCE

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

1. THE SOVIET PRESS MARKED THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WITH SHARPER THAN USUAL CRITICISM OF A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH TOWARD SETTLING THE ME CRISIS AND AN INCREASED EFFORT TO TIE U.S. ME POLICY TO ISRAELI EFFORTS AT AVOIDING A SETTLEMENT.

2. PRAVDA AND IZVESTIYA (DECEMBER 21) CARRIED COMMENTS
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ASSERTING THAT ISRAEL'S EFFORT--BACKED BY FOREIGN SUP-

PORTERS--TO DIRECT THE NEXT STAGE OF ME NEGOTIATIONS TOWARD BILATERAL TALKS WITH EGYPT OR "GROUP" TALKS WITH THE ME COMBATANTS IS DESIGNED TO UNDERMIE ARAB UNITY AND TO DEPRIVE THE PLO OF UNITED ARAB SUPPORT. PRAVDA'S TSAPLIN NOTES THAT DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS TO MOVE A SETTLEMENT BEYOND THE "PARTIAL MEASURE" OF DISENGAGEMENT HAVE FAILED. IN A CLEAR REFERENCE TO THE U.S. HE CHARGES THAT ISRAEL'S "TRADITIONAL FOREIGN PATRONS" ARE COMING TO TEL AVIV'S AID. EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO SUBSTITUTE "GROUP" OR BILATERAL TALKS ON SEPARATE SECONDARY QUESTIONS FOR AN OVERALL POLITICAL SETTLEMENT OF THE CRISIS, AND "SECRET DIPLOMACY" IS UNDER WAY TO PUSH THE ARABS ONTO THE PATH OF PARTIAL AGREEMENTS WITH ISRAEL. THE AIM OF BOTH EFFORTS IS TO PRESERVE THE EXISTING ME SITUATION AND TO SHAKE THE UNITY OF THE ARABS. TSAPLIN CONCLUDES, HOWEVER, THAT THE ARAB STATES ARE INCREASINGLY CONVINCED OF THE NEED TO OPPOSE PARTIAL SOLUTIONS. IN THIS THEY HAVE SOVIET SUPPORT BECAUSE MOSCOW ADVOCATES A STABLE ME PEACE, OPPOSES ATTEMPTS TO LIMIT IT BY PARTIAL MEASURES, AND CONSIDERS URGENT THE ADOPTION OF CONCRETE MEASURES TO GUARANTEE A JUST POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. TSAPLIN CONCLUDES THAT, IN THIS CONTEXT, RENEWAL OF GENEVA WITHOUT DELAY COULD ASSIST THE ATTAINMENT OF A SETTLEMENT.

3. IZVESTIYA'S ME SPECIALIST V. KUDRYAVTSEV, ALONG THE SAME LINE, FOLLOWS UP A CATALOG OF ISRAELI PERFIDY GOING BACK TO 1947 WITH A REPLAY OF BREZHNEV'S ULAN BATOR FORMULA FOR A ME SETTLEMENT AND A REMINDER THAT BOTH THE U.S. AND THE FRENCH HAVE SUPPORTED THE EARLY RENEWAL OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE. BUT, KUDRYAVTSEV SAYS, THE ISRAELI AGGRESSORS AND THEIR "INTERNATIONAL PATRONS" ARE TRYING TO ATTRACT EGYPT TOWARD SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS AND A SEPARATE AGREEMENT WITH ISRAEL. ISRAEL'S AIM, ACCORDING TO KUDRYAVTSEV, IS TO DIVIDE THE ARABS; TO UNTIE ISRAEL'S HANDS IN SINAI FREEING TEL AVIV TO TURN HER MILITARY POTENTIAL AGAINST SYRIA AND LEBANON; AND TO DENY THE PALESTINIANS THE SUPPORT AND AID OF ALL ARAB STATES. KUDRYAVTSEV ALSO CAUTIONS ABOUT THE IDEA (ATTRIBUTED TO THE NEW YORK TIMES) TAUGHT

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TO ISRAEL BY ITS "FOREIGN ACCOMPLICES" THAT TEL AVIV MIGHT GO TO GENEVA IF THIS FORUM WOULD GUARANTEE A "COVER OF ITS OWN KIND" FOR SEPARATE TALKS. ALLEGING THAT EGYPT HAS REJECTED THESE ISRAELI MANEUVERS, KUDRYAVTSEV CONCLUDES THAT ISRAEL MUST CAST ASIDE HOPES OF DIVIDING THE ARABS AND OF IGNORING THE PLO AND THAT THE GENEVA CONCERENCE MUST RENEW ITS WORK AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

4. COMMENT: WHILE WE WOULD EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO USE THE ANNIVERSARY OF GENEVA TO TRUMPET THE CONFERENCE AND TO ATTACK ISRAEL AND THE U.S. FOR HOLDING UP ITS WORK, IN THE CONTEXT OF BREZHNEV'S CAIRO VISIT WE ALSO READ THE ABOVE AS A POINTED WARNING TO SADAT. THE SHARP CRITICISM OF SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS AND KUDRYAVTSEV'S NEGATIVE REFERENCE TO ANY USE OF THE MEPC AS A COVER IMPLY-- AND NONE TOO SUBTLY AT THAT--THAT ANYTHING SHORT OF RENEWING THE FULL GENEVA CONFERENCE WOULD CONSTITUTE BOTH A VICTORY FOR U.S. AND ISRAELI SCHEMES AND TREACHERY BY EGYPT AGAINST HER SYRIAN AND PALESTINIAN ALLIES. THIS IS STRONG STUFF, AND WE TAKE IT BOTH AS AN EFFORT TO TIGHTEN THE SCREWS ON CAIRO BEFORE BREZHNEV ARRIVES AND AS A CLEAR SIGNAL OF WHAT BREZHNEV WILL BE PRESSING FOR WHEN HE GETS THERE.
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